

By Jeff "Chief" Urbaniak
COLUMNIST (www.AdviceChief.com)

Happy Thanksgiving! I hope each and everyone of you are thankful for something or someone this Thanksgiving season. Enjoy some time with family and friends, and if you know someone who is alone on Thanksgiving, invite them to join your Thanksgiving gathering.

Everyone's lives are different with all of us having different attitudes and circumstances that result in different outcomes. There are times that we all feel some degree of despair in our lives and find it difficult to have a thankful mindset. It can be tempting to be bitter, envious, or maybe even jealous when we don't feel like we get our fair share of resources, joyous relationships, or good health. But don't let those moments consume or ruin you. You always have something to be thankful for regardless of your circumstances. So this Thanksgiving season try to find things you are thankful for and place them at the forefront of your thoughts. Here are some things worth being thankful for:

First and foremost, the fact you're alive is a great reason to be thankful. You've been given an opportunity to be a human being on Earth. Just think about that for a moment. If you didn't have that opportunity, you'd never know the joys associated with your senses or the intellectual enlightenment brought on by learning new things. The overall experience of life is certainly a gift that we should be grateful for. Enjoy your gift for as long as you can.

Next, America is a great place to live. In America you can choose any kind of life you want (legally) without reprisal

if you're willing to put in the effort required to be capable or qualified to do what it is you want to do. Regardless of your background or situation, there are opportunities for you if you are willing to make an honest effort. Even people born in poor and broken down neighborhoods have avenues to take if they're willing to travel them. Other countries are similar to America indeed, but have more challenges associated with war, poverty, government regulation, or disease. Be thankful you live in a country that offers great economic opportunities, adequate welfare and healthcare systems, and freedom of choice and activities.

Despite all of these things, everyone's situation is different. Obviously, some people are more fortunate and wealthy than others. However, if you're able to pay your bills, live in a building, eat meals, stay warm and safe, or are in good health, you have a reason to be thankful. Somewhere, someplace, someone is not so lucky. Somewhere, someone is laying on a sewer grate trying to stay warm. Elsewhere, someone is standing in line at a soup kitchen for a meal they can't afford (or they are pilfering through a garbage dumpster near a restaurant). Or maybe someone, somewhere, is sick and has no healthcare insurance. Or how about the person who just came home to find out that their house burned to the ground? Somewhere in a nursing home is someone sitting in a chair in a hallway and no one is coming to visit them. In a shelter service somewhere, a woman and her child are sleeping on cots because of a violent man and they have nowhere else to go. Practically all around us are couples going through a

painful divorce. Somewhere, someone was diagnosed with terminal cancer and told they only have six months left to live. Somewhere in a gang-ridden neighborhood is someone trying to get home without getting mugged or shot. Somewhere, someone has it worse or is suffering more than you.

Of course you may have a legitimate issue that sets you back temporarily, but that's all it has to be: a temporary thing. We all have and feel them from time to time. It's how you think and what you do afterwards that determines if your setback is temporary or permanent. Being thankful for what you have is a first, great step in not letting your setback linger on longer than necessary.

Lastly, if you are fortunate enough to be rich in wealth, be thankful to God. And if you can find it in your heart, occasionally foot the bill for others who are more strapped financially. Or perhaps find a verified charitable organization, a poor family, or an important cause and provide some of your resources to help make the world a better place. Of course you don't have to be rich to share your resources--all of us, regardless of financial status, can and should give of ourselves and resources when we can.

Years ago a wise man gave me some great insight. He told me I already have what I need and to not waste time needing what I want. That's when I learned to be grateful for what I have and to know it's enough.

This Thanksgiving, be thankful and grateful for everything you have and enjoy some time with family and friends.

Happy Thanksgiving!

~ The End ~